

*"Always be ready to give an explanation
to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope"*
1 Peter 3:15

Translation of Our Holy Father St. Dominic

24 May 2025

THE "PUBLICS" OF THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Dominican Family,

I wish to share with you a part of my *relatio* to the General Chapter of Priors Provincials which will be celebrated in Krakow, Poland from 19 July to 8 August 2025. Please accompany us with your prayers so that with the grace and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the capitulars of the General Chapter and the brothers and sisters who will assist us will continue to build on our hopes for the growth of the Order and the renewal of its mission all over the world.

I believe that what is said about the brothers, also apply to a significant extent to our sisters and the lay members of the Dominican family, especially the part that touches upon the mission of our Order today and the "publics of our preaching of the Gospel."

The Call of the Jubilee

You shall count seven weeks of years (sabbath)... This year shall be a jubilee for you... each one shall return to his household... you shall not sow or reap the sprouts of the previous harvest, nor shall you gather the grapes from the vine that is unpruned. For it is a jubilee, and it shall be holy to you (Leviticus 25: 8-12).

The Order celebrates the General Chapter in Krakow within the Jubilee Year of the Lord 2025.

The book of Leviticus tells us that the Holy Year has two important objectives: *returning to one's family and entering into the Sabbath*. Thus, the Jubilee is first of all an invitation to "return" to the Lord (conversion and renewal); and, and for us Dominicans, to "return" to the charism that Dominic received, to renew our commitment to preach the Gospel as Dominic did. The second invitation is to enter the Sabbath, to "rest in God." Paradoxically, the preaching of the Gospel is a demanding and interminable task from which we cannot "rest." What then is this rest? Jesus invites us: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will be refreshed" (Mt 11:28-29). The jubilee "rest" is not a cessation of activity, but an

experience of closeness and union with God, who shares with us his “yoke” or mission. It is the rest St. Augustine wrote about: *our heart is restless until it rests in God*.

Commemorating the General Chapter of Madonna dell’Arco

Last year 2024 we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the General Chapter of Madonna dell’Arco, the chapter that confirmed the Constitution of the Order after the second Vatican Council, which River Forest inchoated in 1968, and Tallaght approbated in 1971. The then Master of the Order, Aniceto Fernández, sadly noted in his *relatio* that the Order lost around 2,000 brothers from 1963 to 1974, i.e., there were 10,150 brothers in 1963, and at the time he wrote his report, there were 7,952 friars. Aware of the divisions and uncertainties in the church after the Second Vatican Council, the newly elected Master, Vincent de Couesnongle, called on the Order to have *courage for the future!*

The capitulars wrote a letter to the brothers and sisters of the Order regarding the “present-day problems (*de problematibus hodiernis*) which might affect the life and work of the Order”.

The world described by the capitulars fifty years ago seems dreadfully familiar to us: “a world marked by divisions and war...”. Looking at the church then, they said: “The church must have an evangelical face. But we know how human frailty weighs it down! Regarding this, a very important question arises for us: what kind of Church do we want? Do we want a powerful, rich, and strong church that resembles the powers of this world? Or do we want a servant-Church where the Spirit’s action and the *charismata* with which He builds up the Christian faithful are not blocked or tarnished by the harshness of human institutions?” (ACG 1974, 253 II, 2).

Faced with these challenges, the capitulars affirmed that the Order will help build the Church through the charism received by Dominic: “We cannot be prophets of the Kingdom unless our preaching is both life and words. The **form of evangelical life** chosen by Dominic is *not an adjunct* of our apostolic mission, on the contrary, **it is an indispensable foundation**, without which our message would lack all credibility; *our form of life is in itself preaching*” (*forma vitae jam est in actu praedicatio*) (ACG 1974, 253 II, 3, emphasis mine). I believe that this affirmation should be the point of departure for the discussion of the recurring topics in our recent general chapters: the vocation of cooperator brothers, conventual structure, restructuring, “authentic Dominican formation,” etc.

Dominican Life as Indispensable Foundation of our Apostolic Mission

The form of evangelical life chosen by Dominic is **an indispensable foundation, not an adjunct of our apostolic mission**. Dominican life has various constitutive elements or aspects: religious consecration, common fraternal life, intellectual life, apostolic life, etc. Given this, it seems odd that we sometimes feel the need to “balance” or “harmonize” life and mission, as if there could be a “Dominican mission” that is not rooted and nourished by the “Dominican life” with all its integral elements. We seem to look at a “part” as though it were a “whole” in itself. Or, as if it is possible to choose only an aspect of Dominican life and set aside the other aspects - for instance, we sometimes hear some friars say: “The mission is important, and for the sake of the mission, we can do away with conventual structures”; or “I am a parish priest, so I must live in the parish rectory apart from the convent”; or, “I love preaching and teaching, but I would rather not live in community”; or “I love the monastic aspect of Dominican life, but I do not want to go out of the convent to teach, or preach, or minister to people”. etc. In one canonical visitation, an elderly friar who lives outside the convent for a long time told me, “I want to *die* a Dominican”, I replied, “I agree, but first, I want you to *live* as a Dominican!”

We are *friars-preachers*, we are neither monks, nor clerics regulars. Yet when we “choose” only one aspect of our Dominican life without the other constitutive elements, we seem to tend towards one or the other form of religious life.

Throughout the years, we found it challenging to define the life of a cooperator-brother; when in fact, “their” religious life is *the same Dominican religious life* that “we” all should live, including those who are ordained among us. When we say, “I am a *Dominican* priest,” that means *being* “Dominican” *qualifies* our priesthood, i.e., we are not clerics regulars or diocesan priests, etc. So, instead of endlessly discussing the cooperator-brotherhood, should we not rather discuss what “Dominican priesthood” means? Can one really say that I am authentically living my “Dominican priesthood” apart from the Dominican religious life that our cooperator brothers live, or apart from a religious community, or without the elements of Dominican religious life? What does it mean for a Dominican religious to be “*cooperator* of the episcopal order” (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 2)? This does not mean that we should slacken in promoting vocations to the cooperator brotherhood; rather, we should continue to promote integrally the vocations to the Dominican religious life, wherein some are ordained and some are not.

Jesus asked two disciples who were following him, “What do you seek?” They answered, “Rabbi, where are you staying?” (Ποῦ μένεις John 1:38). We know that the disciples were not asking for Jesus’ “address,” the place where Jesus lived. The disciples were seekers, and they wanted to know not so much “where,” but “how” Jesus lived, so that they can discover the meaning of their own lives, and live them according to Jesus’ invitation: “Come and see.” We know that the Greek μένω means “to remain, to abide,” which in the New Testament expresses an abiding connection with Jesus.

We are in the Order because we followed the path of Dominic in responding to Jesus’ call. We believe that Dominican life in its entirety, i.e., the integrity of all its elements (common life, study, preaching, evangelical counsels, etc.) corresponds to the life we seek. *What is important is Dominican life in its fullness, not walls and buildings*, said a Dominican nun who contemplated the impending closure of her monastery and, consequently, her transfer to another monastery.

The “theology of the jubilee year” as read in Old Testament is complemented and completed by Jesus’ messianic mandate in the New Testament. In the gospel of Luke (4:16-21), integral to the inauguration of Jesus’ public ministry is his return to His home in Nazareth, to His custom of “sabbath in the synagogue,” and to his reading of the Scriptures and preaching.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

“Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Isaiah’s vision is fulfilled in Jesus’ messiahship and mission. In like manner, “Mission is primarily *who we are* and, secondarily, *what we do*”. Dominic asked Pope Honorius III to make a small but meaningful change in the Bull of 21 January 1217 i.e., to have the original word

“praedicantes (persons who are preaching) replaced by the substantive *praedicatores*”.¹ Thus, our founder’s vision is realized in the preachers who formed his Order. Our mission is who we are (preachers), not primarily what we do (preaching). We are preachers even when we are old or sick and could not anymore speak, we are preachers even when we are young and silenced by our shyness, we are preachers even when we are not ordained, etc. We incarnate preaching by our very lives. This is our mission, our being.

The instruction *The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish community in the Service of the Evangelizing Mission of the Church* published a few years ago by the Holy See affirms: “The contribution that consecrated men and women can bring to the *evangelizing mission* of the Parish [church] community *is derived firstly, from their “being”, that is, from the witness of a radical following of Christ through the profession of the evangelical counsels*, and only secondly from their “doing”, that is, from the works carried out in accordance with the charism of each Institute.”² Thus, for us Dominicans, we fulfill the *propositum* of the Order, i.e., **preaching for the salvation of souls**, primarily by our fidelity to Dominican life (*being*)³ and secondarily, by the different works of preaching (*doing*), after all, *being* precedes *action* by nature (*“esse est prius natura quam agere”* S. Th. III, q., 34, a.2 ad 1um).

Vision and Priorities to Realize the *Propositum Ordinis*

The *propositum Ordinis* (LCO I and II), “preaching for the salvation of souls”, remains unchanged, yet it is concretized in diverse ways in the living tradition of the Order through time and space, through the march of history and the expanse of geography. The preaching of Dominic with the innkeeper, the preaching of Thomas Aquinas in the university of Paris, the preaching of fra Angelico in Florence, the preaching of Catherine of Siena in Italy, the preaching of Antonio Montesinos in Hispaniola, the preaching of Martin de Porres in Lima, etc. are concrete realizations of the same *propositum*, yet they are not exactly the same in terms of form and, sometimes, content. But all are directed to the same end: preaching for the salvation of souls. But how does “preaching for the salvation of souls” look like in our time, in the different provinces and communities of the Order?

Without a vision the people will be lost! (Proverbs 29:18). We trust in God’s *providence*; He provides (*pro-videre*) for our needs. But we are also called to participate in that providence i.e., to “foresee” the need and to envision the most appropriate response to such need. In this sense, to envision concretely how we intend to realize the *propositum Ordinis*, according to our concrete circumstances is to participate in God’s *providence*.

Certainly we have a “sense” of a common **vision** and **priorities** of the Order and our Provinces, but often, we do not articulate them clearly so that all brothers know and feel they are truly working together for the realization of such vision and priorities. Thus, some brothers think that their province or some convents have no “culture of long-term planning”, or that they are simply in “maintenance mode”. The articulation of a vision, for example, “where we want the province to be in ten years” - is important because it will serve as a reference point in making decisions that, cumulatively, will bring about its realization. When a clearly articulated vision and priorities are lacking in our community projects, we miss the

¹ Vladimir Koudelka, *Dominic*, trans by Simon Tugwell (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997) p. 9.

² Congregation for the Clergy, “The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish community in the Service of the Evangelising Mission of the Church” (29 June 2020), no. 84. Emphasis mine.

³ This recognition from the Holy See that *being* a religious, living the religious life, is the primary contribution of consecrated people to the evangelizing mission of the Church resonates with our tradition in calling the convent/community as “sacra praedicatio” (cf. LCO 100 § I.) and Madonna dell’Arco’s affirmation: *forma vitae jam est in actu praedicatio* (ACG 1974, 253 II).

fundamental elements that give coherence to our communal task, we fail to grasp where we are going, and we lack the criteria to evaluate whether we are progressing or not.

The vision and priorities will help a province in the formation and complementary studies of the brothers who will carry out the vision and serve in the priorities of the province. Our vision and priorities should guide our decisions in opening or closing a Dominican presence. At times, our decisions are influenced by opportunities that open up e.g., a bishop is friendly to us or there is a benefactor who will donate a property for the use of the Order etc. But would such a decision help us obtain our vision and stated priorities or simply be a distraction? Certainly, an important criterion in setting the priorities of a province is to discern and decide where the charism of the Order can serve better the needs of the Church (cf. LCO 106 § I).

Without a clearly articulated vision and priorities, we could fall into any of these tendencies:

- *“SWOTING”: Identifying and responding to strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats without any reference to our identity and mission.*
- *“TRENDING”: Choosing projects based on whatever is trendy or popular.*
- *“LOBBYING”: Each friar advocating for his favorite project.*
- *“ROUTINING”: Doing simply more of the same without considering the need for change.*
- *“ANCHORING”: Being attached to the flagship programs of a grand past heritage.*
- *“HERO-ING”: Meeting the greatest needs and demands without taking into account charism, capabilities or resources.*
- *“INFLUENCER-FOLLOWING”: Doing whatever funders and authorities want the organization to do.”⁴*

One begins with the *end* in view. “The end is last in the order of execution, yet it is first in the order of intention” (S.Th. I-II, q.1, resp.1). A concise yet comprehensive vision and priorities should provide a clear direction or “roadmap” which provides a foundation for continuity even when there are changes in leadership, and serve as a basis for community projects and integrate them into a coherent “provincial community project”.

Dominican Mission In Medio Ecclesiae

The Order is at the service of the Church whose mission is “to proclaim always and everywhere the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” Yet sometimes we ask ourselves, should Dominicans be involved in parish ministry? Or take care of sanctuaries and shrines? Should we not be itinerant preachers, going to places where the Gospel is yet to be proclaimed? Or should we be stable professors in faculties and universities?

Br. Damian Byrne, 84th Master of the Order said: “I am more convinced than ever that the **Four Priorities of the Order** as enunciated at the General Chapter held at Quezon City (1977) and reiterated at subsequent Chapters have a deep and unfolding significance for us. [...] Rooted in our heritage, these reflect the whole tradition of the Order. They are not just something conjured up at Quezon City.” True, the four priorities - **Evangelizing** culture through philosophical and theological investigations; **Catechizing** a de-Christianized world and a secularized Christianity; **Justice and Peace** for the integral liberation of humankind; using the new means of **Social Communication** for the preaching of the word of God - remain valid until today. After some years, the General Chapter of Avila (1986) identified **Five Frontiers of Evangelization**, namely the frontiers *between life and death* (challenge of Justice

⁴ Christina Keng, “A Presentation on Pastoral Planning”, 2023.

and Peace), *between humanity and inhumanity* (challenge of the marginalized), *Christian experience*, (challenge of the great world religions), *religious experience* (challenge of secular ideologies), and *the Church* (challenge of non-Catholic Christians and of the sects) identified the *boundaries* where preachers must bring the light of the Gospel. The General Chapter of Rome identified the mission mandates. Br. Bruno Cadore called the Order “to strengthen the dialogue among us about and from the preaching mission. This effort touches three principal areas: *Mission Forums* that will allow brothers working in the same apostolic field to dialogue among themselves and to reflect on the pastoral and theological dimensions of their mission; *Salamanca Process*” that is trying to promote theological and interdisciplinary dialogue concerning pastoral situations in particularly vulnerable contexts; and the exploitation of *apostolic creativity* in the “new continent” of the *Internet and the world of new social networks*” (Trogir 2013). All these remain valid and important for the Order until today. **But after considering the contexts, issues, and strategies of the complex mission of evangelization, I call on the Order to focus its attention to the “publics”, the persons to whom we address the Gospel, within the Church’s mission of “new (renewed) evangelization”.** As we try to understand more profoundly the “publics” of our preaching, we should be mindful of the example of St. Dominic who was “converted” after a night-long dialogue with the innkeeper – that experience gradually led him to leave behind a promising ecclesiastical career as a canon of the cathedral of Osma, and chose to be called “Brother Dominic” (*Libellus*, 21). Evangelization brings with it the grace of conversion, both for the evangelized and the evangelizer. “*The Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself*”(Evangelii Nuntiandi, 15).

We serve the Church through our charism as friars-preachers. From *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN, 1975), *Redemptoris Missio* (RM, 1990), *Ubicumque et Semper* (US, 2010), to *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG, 2013), the Magisterium of the Church has identified areas for a *new evangelization*, which I believe should be systematically and intentionally adopted by the Order as focus or priorities in realizing the *propositum Ordinis*.

As I asked the General Chapter to discuss and propose concrete strategies on how to bring the *propositum Ordinis* to bear on the following, so I propose for your reflection and action the following:

- I. ***Missio ad Gentes* - to those who have not yet known Jesus** (Acts 17:23)
- II. **Mission to deepen the faith of believers** (Luke 1:1-4)
- III. **Mission to those who walked away from the Church** (Luke 24:13-32)
- IV. **Mission to the Young People** (John 6: 5-15)

- I. **Mission *ad gentes*, the mission of St. Paul to persons who have not yet known Jesus: “I even discovered an altar inscribed, ‘To an Unknown God.’ What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you” (Acts 17:23).**

Today, *the place of mission is no longer just the one that is far from home, it is also close to home!* At times, when we leave the convent, we encounter “many men, women, and children who do not know the joy of friendship with Jesus”. Mission *ad gentes* is not just a mission to certain parts of the world, but to all parts of the world!

We appreciate our brothers sisters who are in places of *missio ad gentes*, where the Church is in the process of implantation. But the Order has to be intentional also in reaching out to *seekers*, to those who are yet to hear and believe in Christ. Some areas where our brothers are

already working are: presence and ministry in universities, preaching in the digital continent, etc. Though written thirty five years ago, John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio* is worth revisiting to determine what we can concretely do in our time:

“There are many other forms of the "Areopagus" in the modern world toward which the Church's missionary activity ought to be directed; for example, commitment to peace, development and the liberation of peoples; the rights of individuals and peoples, especially those of minorities; the advancement of women and children; safeguarding the created world. These too are areas which need to be illuminated with the light of the Gospel.

“We must also mention the immense "Areopagus" of culture, scientific research, and international relations which promote dialogue and open up new possibilities. We would do well to be attentive to these modern areas of activity and to be involved in them. People sense that they are, as it were, traveling together across life's sea, and that they are called to ever greater unity and solidarity. Solutions to pressing problems must be studied, discussed and worked out with the involvement of all. That is why international organizations and meetings are proving increasingly important in many sectors of human life, from culture to politics, from the economy to research. Christians who live and work in this international sphere must always remember their duty to bear witness to the Gospel” RM, 37).

Evangelii Gaudium reminds us that in our day, “Proclaiming the Gospel message to different cultures also involves proclaiming it to professional, scientific and academic circles. This means an encounter between faith, reason and the sciences with a view to developing new approaches and arguments on the issue of credibility, a creative apologetic which would encourage greater openness to the Gospel on the part of all” (EN, 132)

Missio ad gentes also involves encounter with people of other religions. Interreligious *dialogue* and *proclamation*, while distinct, are both integral and valid aspects of of the Church's evangelization: “true interreligious dialogue on the part of the Christian supposes the desire to make Jesus Christ better known, recognized and loved; proclaiming Jesus Christ is to be carried out in the Gospel spirit of dialogue”.⁵

Surveys of religious demography vary sharply across countries and regions in the world. One researcher claimed: “There is a palpable Gen Z religious revival. Those of faith within the 18-24 year age bracket are the most likely to believe in a God, to believe that their God is the only God, and to hold that God shapes their moral values.” Another research claims: “Around one-third of Gen Zers (34%) and millennials (35%) identify as religiously unaffiliated, compared with 25% of Gen Xers, 19% of baby boomers, and 15% of the Silent Generation.” Of course, surveys are just tools and there could be margins of errors. But it would be interesting if the capitulars could share to the chapter what they know about the religious demography within the territory of their province. True, we should not be preoccupied with numbers, but preaching for the salvation souls also means we should use all the available tools we have to help us fulfill our mission.

What are the concrete vision and goals the Order must articulate which will serve as guide for our brothers and sisters in preaching the Gospel *ad gentes*? What are the clear criteria which our Order and each branch of the Dominican Family can use to determine whether

⁵ Pontifical Council For Inter-Religious Dialogue, *Dialogue And Proclamation*, 19 May 1991, no., 77.

we are advancing in this mission, or not, so that appropriate adjustments could be made so that we could become more effective in our preaching *ad gentes*?

It is said that “not everything that counts, can be counted”. Yet we must also have some objective yardsticks or criteria by which we can say, “thanks to God’s grace, we are advancing in our mission *ad gentes*”? Or, we are unable to obtain this objective, therefore, we need to rethink our methodology, approach, etc? We must bear in mind “that the root of all evangelization lies not a human plan of expansion, but rather the desire to share the inestimable gift that God has wished to give us, making us sharers in his own life”.⁶

II. Mission to deepen the faith of believers, the “mission” of Luke in writing the Gospel addressed to a certain “Theophilus”, a “friend of God” who typifies every believer who opens himself to God and desires to know the Gospel: **“I have decided to write an ordered account for you, Theophilus, so that you may learn how well founded the teaching is that you have received”** (Luke 1:1-4).

One of the questions I encounter during visitations is “is parish ministry a proper Dominican apostolate?” True, parish ministry ties us to a certain place and makes us less agile and itinerant. However, **taking care of a stable community, walking with its members in their journey of life and faith is also a form of “itinerancy”**. Parish ministry is more than just sacramental ministry. It is about accompanying people in the deepening of their life of faith.

A Dominican parish must be one in which the *communion of brothers shepherds the communion of the parish*. I am happy to note that in a good number of parishes I visited, I have seen how the brothers realize the “Pillars of Dominican Life” within the parish i.e., the sense of **community** among the parishioners, the life of **study** (do the friars offer conferences, Bible study etc. to the parishioners), **prayer** (i.e., friars pray *with* the community and not just celebrate the Eucharist for them, and finally **apostolate** i.e., forming our parishioners so that that they become not merely passive recipients but **agents of evangelization**: “disciple-missionaries” or “contemplative-evangelizers,” etc.

Since the “family is a domestic church” and parents should be “the first preachers of the faith to their children” (LG, 11) we must give special attention to the formation of these “first preachers”. We know that a serious rupture in the transmission of the faith to the next generation happens when parents neglect to bring their children to the church.

What we say about a parish can be said about the other “stable” institutions under the care of our brothers and sisters - schools, universities, chaplaincies, etc. The intellectual mission of the Order is important in engaging “the intellectuals who feel the need to know Jesus Christ in a light different from the instruction they received as children, and for many others” (EN, 52, *Ubicumque et Semper*). We know, of course, that the mission of deepening the faith of believers should always be open to mission *ad gentes*, i.e., parishes must reach out to the “non-affiliated”, the “seekers; schools must be attentive and welcoming to non-believers etc.

III. Mission to encounter and accompany those are walking away from the Church, those who are on the same “road” as the two disciples walking away from Jerusalem, the community of faith, towards Emmaus. Their “eyes were prevented from recognizing Jesus who was walking with them”, but later, they recognized Jesus in the Scriptures and Breaking of Bread. (Luke 24:13-32).

⁶ Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter *Ubicumque et Semper* (document has no paragraph numbers).

Secularization has a lot to do with people who have gradually distanced themselves from the practice of the faith. They have lost that sense to recognize Jesus in Word and Sacrament. How can we engage them and invite them back to see Jesus once again? How can we walk with them, talk with them, sit at a table with them like Dominic did with the innkeeper? Are we prepared to be “converted” in our dialogue with them as Dominic was “converted” when he left a promising “ecclesiastical career” in Osma after that encounter?

The two disciples who were walking away from Jerusalem were shocked by the crucifixion, “how can the Messiah die on us?”, they must have thought. In our time, we cannot deny that many people are walking out of the Church because they have been scandalized by us, by the different abuses (sexual, spiritual, psychological) committed by their spiritual brothers and sisters.

What are we doing as an Order to invite these people back to the community of faith. What more could we do so that our preaching (*verbis et exempli*) could help them recognize Jesus in his saving Word and in the breaking of the Bread? What should we do so that the wounds that helped Thomas recognize the Risen Lord - “my Lord and my God” - can heal the wounds of broken trust and fractured relationships?

As pilgrims walking with the Lord, we realize that we have fellow pilgrims – our brothers and sisters in other Christian churches. Fostering ecumenical dialogue is a concrete way of listening to the prayer of Jesus that “all may be one” (John 17:21). Christian unity is crucial for the credibility of the Christian message - “that the world may believe” in Jesus (John 17:23). The Hebrew scriptures, which Jesus explained to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, are key to understanding the Messiah. While Jews cannot accept Jesus as Messiah, we continue to read the Hebrew Scriptures together and help one another to deepen our understanding of God’s word (cf. EG, 249).

IV. A special Mission to the Youth, who are found in the aforementioned faith-situations. Many young people, even in places imbued with a “Christian culture”, are not leaving the Church, they have not even “entered” the Church for the first time because their parents decided not to bring them to the Church!

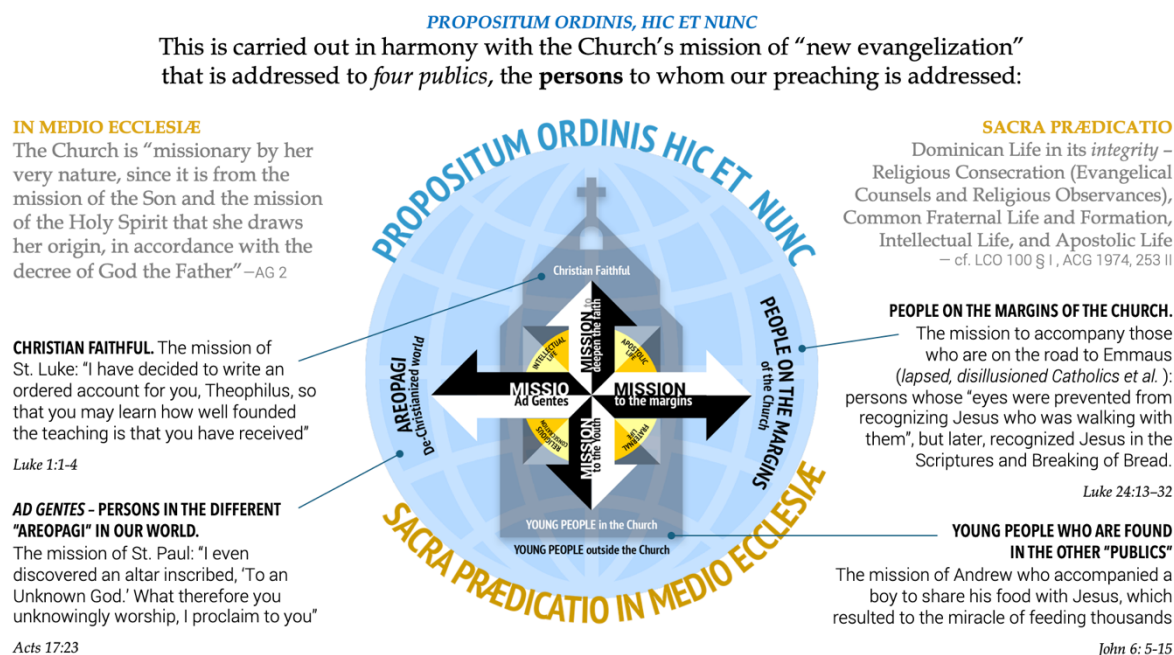
Many young people today probably have a similar question as the young man who asked Jesus: “Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?” (Matt 19:16). We should welcome them and engage them in their search for what is true and good. **I believe that our brothers in schools, university chaplaincies or in other forms of ministry to young people in parishes and shrines share a mission similar to that of the apostle Andrew.** In the wonderful story of the multiplication of the loaves and fish (John 6: 5-15), Jesus fed thousands, thanks to the boy who generously offered his bread and fish to the Lord, and to Andrew who wisely perceived that the boy had something to offer. There would be no miracle without the boy, and without Andrew, the boy’s offering might not have reached Jesus. The boy was not just hungry for food, he was hungry to do something good for others! We need “Andrews” who can accompany young people willing to share their gifts and talents with the Church! We must give young people opportunities to feel the joy we feel when we serve the people of God.

In this jubilee year, a member of our Dominican Family, Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, is set to be canonized. This young person - dubbed as the “man of the eight beatitudes” - offers a most attractive portrait of the Dominican life. By his piety and energy, he points us “to the heights” (*verso l’alto*). Through his intercession, may all Dominicans draw inspired breath, and

commit to preaching to, with, through the young, who remain as the future of society and the hope of the church.

Conclusion

To sum up, here is an infographic which would help us visualize our charism and mission, understand the vision and priorities of our Order today, and find our place in the realization of the *propositum Ordinis* within the Church today.



There is no doubt that the effort to proclaim the Gospel to the people of today, who are buoyed up by hope but at the same time often oppressed by fear and distress, is a service rendered to the Christian community and also to the whole of humanity (EN, 1). These words of St. Paul VI written 50 years ago remain true today.

Among the "publics" mentioned above, to whom do you principally direct your preaching as a (vice) province, as a congregation of Dominican sisters, as members of the Dominican family? More importantly, what are some "good practices" regarding this topic which you believe are worth sharing with the Dominican family, which can inspire others to do something similar? Do you have some thoughts or suggestions on how to deepen and develop further our mission of "preaching for the salvation of souls" today? I would appreciate receiving your responses which you can send to our General Curia (secretarius@curia.op.org).

Your brother in St. Dominic,

f. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP
f. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP
Master of the Order